

Recruiters Predict a Hiring Boom

By Sharon L. Florentine

Is the recruiting industry on track for a recovery? Some pros in the trenches are expecting an out-and-out boom.

Jim Frye, managing partner, Execuseek International, said he sees a bonanza of executive hiring around the corner. The executive recruiter has seen a few booms before in his 15-year career, and he said he sees evidence now that indicates another is looming.



So many companies have cut so many positions in response to the downturn, they will have no choice but to hire as business begins to return to normal levels, he said. "I see evidence that there will be a quick recovery for recruiters," Frye said. "Right now, we are staffing a lot of executive-level, senior positions that will then need to backfill middle management and support staff underneath them."

Health care and technology are already starting to bounce back, he said, and will need to add staff to meet the demand.

Nelson De Leon, a recruiting consultant with America at Work, also expects a boom time for recruiters, but he sees the demand coming from the candidate's side. Right now, he said many executives are "hunkering down," afraid to leave their present positions and the guarantee of a reliable paycheck. When the economy does start to recover, De Leon said, he expects recruiters will have their hands full with job seekers looking for a better deal.

"Right now, nobody's searching for new positions or angling for new opportunities because any paycheck is a good paycheck," he said. "Once the economy improves, companies are going to have to deal with a mass exodus of employees who've been biding their time, and that will mean great opportunities for us."

In addition, De Leon said many companies have used the economic downturn as an excuse to get rid of "dead weight" — employees who weren't contributing to the success of the company but who, because of tenure or internal politics, couldn't be eliminated otherwise. An economic recovery will offer these companies the chance to fill these slots with cream-of-the-crop talent, both Frye and De Leon said.

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